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ABSTRACT

The enormous and rapidly-increasing number of goods on the market makes it difficult to ensure that all consumer products are safe to use. Public concern about product safety has caused the enactment of a wide range of consumer protection laws. The result of this legislation has been that many agencies have been established to protect the public. Also, many voluntary organizations have been formed to promote and maintain consumer safety. In order to increase consumer awareness, this booklet provides listings of the relevant government agencies on both the federal and provincial level and of seven nongovernment consumer protection groups as well. The Independent Certification Agencies that concern themselves with consumer protection are also described to enhance consumer awareness. Even with many agencies available, it is the consumer who must exercise caution. Specific guidelines to assist consumers are provided. Also discussed is a method to increasing effectiveness in making consumer complaints. (SM)

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Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs

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I. Consumer Protection — Who Protects You? How Can You Protect Yourself?

EMERGENCY

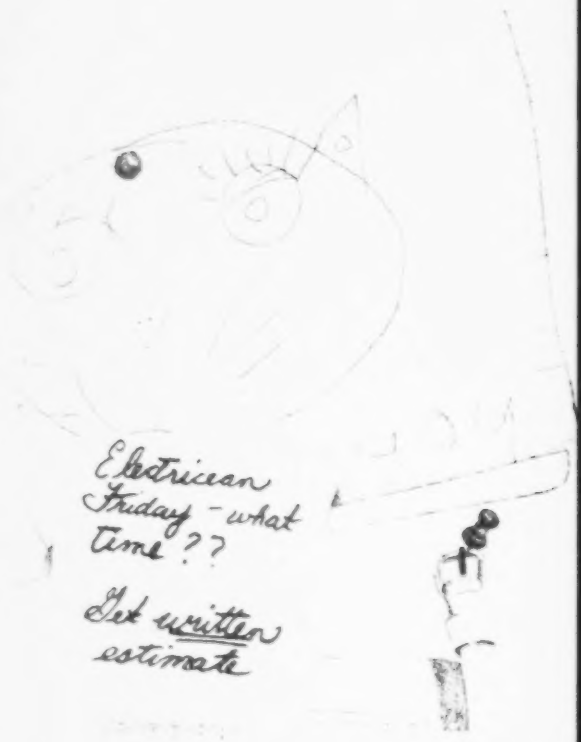
Doctor _____

Ambulance _____

Poison Control Centre _____

Police _____

Fire ___



Electrician Friday - what time??

Get written estimate

Tuesday 9:AM take in the car don't forget warranty!

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Who Should Protect the Consumer

Each year, an estimated 6.5 million Canadian consumers require medical attention due to accidental injuries. Of these, 9000 are killed in accidents involving consumer products purchased in the Canadian marketplace. "Fatal and non-fatal injuries off-the-job outstrip on-the-job injuries nearly 6 to 1," reports the Canadian Safety Council. The cost of these off-the-job accidents is staggering — over $9.7 billion in medical costs and countless more in lost earnings, insurance payouts and compensation benefits. Further, there is no way to measure the amounts of inconvenience, pain and suffering caused to individuals and families.

Whose responsibility is it to protect the consumer?

Should it be solely up to the consumer to be wary and cautious in making a purchase and to keep informed about the safe use of the newest technological and chemical inventions?

Since accidents clearly cost taxpayers and governments a great deal of money, is it up to governments to protect consumers by regulating and legislating consumer product safety?

Is it up to the manufacturers and sellers of consumer products to make and sell products that won't harm or injure the users?

Should consumer protection be the responsibility of an independent agency with no vested interest in the sales of a consumer product and immune to industry pressures that sometimes determine government policies?

Or should the responsibility of consumer protection belong to a highly-organized volunteer group of consumers that acts on behalf of all consumers in the country?

In Canada, no one group or agency is solely responsible for consumer safety. Responsibility rests with governments, industry, consumer organizations, independent agencies, and with YOU, THE CONSUMER!

Why Governments Have Responsibility

In a rapidly changing, technological world consumers are often unable to keep up with the latest developments and as a result, cannot always safely use the newest products on the market. Governments therefore act on behalf of consumers by establishing regulations and mandatory product safety standards for manufacturers, distributors, importers or retailers of consumer goods. Governments take action to exclude or remove dangerous products from the marketplace. And often, they provide consumer education and information in order to assist citizens in becoming knowledgeable consumers able to make informed choices.

Why Industry and Business Have Responsibility

News travels fast — especially bad news! If a consumer product is found to be dangerous, word can get around very rapidly today and have a negative impact on the sales of that product.

For this reason, many members of industry set and follow voluntary standards on product safety and performance, or comply with mandatory or voluntary standards established by governments and independent consumer product testing agencies or consumer associations.

Consumers need to be aware that voluntary standards are just that — voluntary in that not all members of an industry may agree to follow the standards. Sometimes voluntary standards are only those minimal standards that all members of an industry agree to adopt, and do not always provide the optimum level of product safety. Voluntary standards work best when there is some degree of government activity involved, or when the marketplace can influence industry to make and sell products that are safe.

How Voluntary Consumer Organizations Protect Consumers

Strong, well-organized consumer associations have a very important role to play in protecting the consumer. They can provide the balance to the highly-organized, well-financed industry lobby on government. Many consumer organizations print, produce and distribute helpful consumer information in magazines, articles and pamphlets. They can also provide leadership to the public to put pressure on industry to improve the safety and performance of products.

How Independent Consumer Product Testing and Certification Agencies Protect Consumers

Independent agencies, such as the **Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada,** and the **Canadian Standards Association,** develop standards for minimum safety and performance qualities of consumer goods. These standards stipulate that measures which prevent injury or death be built into the product; that products provide a minimum level of quality, reliability and performance; and that products designed to fit or work together actually do. Standards also reduce unnecessary variety in products.

In some cases, such as in the manufacturing and sale of smoke detectors or electrical appliances, the government stipulates that it is mandatory for industry to adhere to certain standards established by these independent agencies.

Advance tests are performed on the products. If they meet the requirements of the standards, they are certified and can carry a seal of certification which tells consumers that the product meets the (required) standards.

Unless the government requires it through legislation, manufacturers have no legal obligation to obtain certification for their products.

Frequently, however, the industries voluntarily follow and accept standards and comply by submitting their product for testing so that the standards agency mark can be used on their products. Manufacturers have a dual purpose in participating in product testing:

1) raising the level of product safety, and

2) minimizing or avoiding expensive litigation.

There are five accredited certification agencies in Canada, each with its own seal of certification. Here are four* of them:

Canadian Standards Association (CSA)

Canadian Gas Association (CGA)

Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC)

Warnock Hersey Professional Services Limited (WHPS)

Certification is information. It tells you that a product or system has been carefully tested and evaluated under a formal system that includes examination, testing and inspection, and that all requirements for safety and performance are met.

Look for a mark of certification before you buy!

Your Responsibility as a Consumer and How You Can Exercise It

Just as you have the right to consume and purchase goods, to choose freely, and to be safe, you also have a responsibility to choose wisely, to keep informed, to "sound off" when you find a product to be faulty, unsafe or harmful, and to put safety first.

* The fifth is the Plywood Sector of the Council of Forest Industries of British Columbia.

Ways You Can Exercise Your Responsibility as a Consumer:

- **Consult every available source of information about a product "before" you buy.** Seek information about price, quality, service, brand reputation, warranties and product safety and performance. Consumer magazines, consumer articles or items printed in newspapers or consumer radio or television shows can be very helpful. Visit your library. Or use the list of consumer publications provided at the end of this chapter.
- **Talk to friends.** Sometimes the personal experiences of others can help you make a decision.
- **Consult some independent sources of consumer information** — the testmakers and standards setters (if the item is costly). A list of these will be provided later.
- **Read any promotional or advertising material available on a product with an open mind.** Be aware of who is paying for this information and that it is placed there to encourage you to buy the product. Information gathered solely by reading manufacturers' or retailers' advertising or brochures is one-sided and incomplete.
- **Read all labels.** Packaging information and labels are often the only sources of information that can tell you about the product composition and ingredients, how to care for the product, potential hazards and other information. In many products, the information that appears on a label is determined and required by law. It should tell you enough about the product to help you make comparisons before you make your decision to purchase. Pay special attention to stated hazards, warnings, or potential dangers. These may be enough to encourage you to shop around for something else that will do the job. Be certain you understand the directions, especially the stated precautions.
- **Know your retailer.** Compare the operating policies of the stores in your area regarding the availability of repairs. As well, check their reputations. Find sales clerks who are knowledgeable about the product, especially when the product represents a major investment such as a car or appliance. Ask about price, quality, service, brand reputation and warranties and compare — not only brand names, but the stores themselves. Policies such as return practices can vary as much as price from store to store. Shop around!
- **Personally enforce your consumer rights!** Make complaints when you feel you have a right to complain. Complaining about a product's quality, performance or safety helps keep suppliers, manufacturers and retailers on their toes. When you pinpoint poor service and deficiency in product or point out misleading advertising or other malpractices you help **all** consumers and the manufactuers and retailers as well!!

If you find a product to be faulty, defective or hazardous, don't just sit back, say nothing, or quietly seethe inside as you throw the product away. Call someone and report it.

REMEMBER, INFORMED CONSUMERS ARE PROTECTED CONSUMERS!

How to Complain Effectively

Each year Canadians make thousands of complaints to various consumer and government agencies about products which they believe are harmful in some way. Statistics indicate that more than 60 per cent of complaints investigated are valid. So it's important that you complain when you have a good reason to complain.

Complaints can result in improved manufacturing and quality-control programs and help prevent similar problems from occurring to other consumers.

Complaining to a business where a product was purchased is fair to the business and helps it improve its service to customers. When you complain to a store about a product you purchased from it, you give it the first opportunity to remedy the problem or provide assistance. You also give the business useful information about which products are likely to cause trouble and should be avoided in the future. Most businesses today want to sell quality products, not problems.

Complaints about inferior products also provide the incentive for the development of higher standards for industry. In tight economic times, when people have less money to spend, they want to make sure they purchase products which are safe and will stand up to normal wear and use. Increasingly, high standards are becoming a matter of market survival.

Do You Have A Valid Complaint?

1. Did you gather information about the product before purchasing it to make sure that the product would serve your purpose?
   Yes _____ No _____
2. Did you fully explain to the sales clerk what you wanted the product for?
   Yes _____ No _____
3. Did you use the product only for the purpose described?
   Yes _____ No _____
4. Did you examine the quality of the product before you purchased it?
   Yes _____ No _____
5. Did you follow the instructions for the assembly, use and care of the product?
   Yes _____ No _____
6. Are you unhappy with the product because it is a different size or colour than what you ordered?
   Yes _____ No _____
7. Are you unhappy with the product because there are parts missing?
   Yes _____ No _____
8. Are you unhappy with the product because it caused injury to people or damage to property when the product was used?
   Yes _____ No _____
9. Are you unhappy with the product because it was delivered to you damaged or broken or didn't last very long?
   Yes _____ No _____
10. Are you unhappy with the product because you found a similar product somewhere else for less money?
    Yes _____ No _____

Answers:

You have a valid complaint if you answered "yes" to questions 1-5.

You have a valid complaint if you answered "yes" to any **one** of questions 6-9.

You do not have a valid complaint if you answered "yes" to question 10; if you answered "no" you may still have a valid complaint.

It is your responsibility to determine your needs, to shop around for value and buy accordingly. Businesses are under no obligation to refund, return or exchange goods for you if you answered "yes" to question 10.

Easy Steps to Follow When You Complain

1. It's a good idea to always anticipate that you might have problems with consumer products you purchase. **Save your sales receipts,** contracts, sales details which outline payments and delivery, etc., information about warranties or where you can get a product serviced, product serial numbers and any other reference information. Note where and when you purchased the product — even the person who sold the product to you.

   This way, should you have a complaint, you will have all the information you need to make your complaint handy and ready to use!

2. **Be patient.** It takes time, persistence and a lot of effort to resolve some problems. Sometimes the greatest lesson learned is to be more careful the next time.

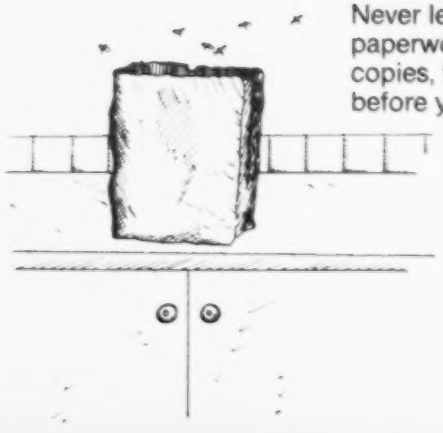
3. **Complain first to the retailer.** If you can carry it, take the product to the store, along with your paper information (sales slips, warranty cards, cancelled cheques, etc.) as soon as you notice a problem. If possible, go to the person who sold you the item. If the item was purchased at a checkout, go to the department manager or customer service desk.

4. To save time and avoid frustration, **ask the person you are speaking to if he/she has the authority to help you solve your problem.** If that person can't help you, find out who can and go to the right person. It can be very annoying to explain the situation, then be referred to someone else and have to start all over again.

5. When you have the person with the authority to help you, **explain your problem clearly and calmly,** stating your reason for dissatisfaction and what you would like to have done about your complaint. Be businesslike, firm and factual. Be reasonable too and keep your temper in check.

6. **Listen carefully** to the answers you get from the seller. You may not have a valid complaint as far as the store is concerned. If the store is willing to resolve the problem to your satisfaction, your complaint ends. If it won't and you think it has more responsibility, then carry on with the next step.

7. **Start keeping a record** of the names of people you have contacted, the dates of meeting, what was said and the results if any. As well, keep a file of all correspondence, telephone calls, dates of return or refunds, payments, etc. Keep duplicate copies of all correspondence. Never leave your sales receipts, cancelled cheques or other paperwork with the person to whom you're complaining; if they want copies, they should make them and return your material to you before you leave the premises.



8. **Keep the faulty or dangerous product,** too, along with its original package. If the product at fault is food, keep it in the fridge until it has been inspected. Keep a list of: who has been affected and how, when the food was eaten, what the symptoms were, how long the product was used, if instructions were followed properly and the product was maintained properly according to the manufacturer's instructions, etc.
9. **Put your complaint in writing** to the manufacturer of the item you're complaining about, to the head office of the store, or to the nearest office of the government department responsible for the safety of a particular product. You might also consider sending a copy or a separate letter of complaint to a business or professional association such as a Chamber of Commerce or Better Business Bureau that the retailer or manufacturer belongs to. **Keep copies of all letters you send for your own files for further use.**

   To contact the manufacturer, ask the retailer for the address or call the nearest office of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada, your library or the Consumer Information Centre.
10. If you're still not satisfied, **give your letter to one of the many voluntary provincial or federal consumer organizations across Canada.** (A list is provided later in this booklet). You can also contact Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs or the nearest office of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada if the product is dangerous.
11. Any complaints about **food labelling, advertising or fraud** should be made to the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada.
12. If a **food product** looks or tastes strange, is mouldy, contains insects, filth or other foreign matter, is defectively packaged, or appears to have been tampered with, call an inspector in the nearest regional or district office of the Health Protection Branch, Health and Welfare Canada.
13. Complaints about **illness from food eaten in a restaurant,** cafeteria or vending machine or take-out outlet, or about food being served in unsanitary surroundings should be reported to your local health unit, the Provincial Department of Health, or the nearest branch of the Federal Health Protection Office, Health and Welfare Canada.
14. Advise the Health Protection Branch, Health and Welfare Canada, if any **drugs, cosmetics, medical devices** or **radiation-emitting devices** cause an adverse reaction, are advertised in a misleading manner, are mislabelled, have been sold illegally or are ineffective, or have been tampered with. While sometimes an adverse reaction to a product may be just a personal allergy or what you had thought to be misleading advertising turns out to be legal, the product should be reported if there is even the slightest possibility of danger or deception.
15. Should you not receive satisfaction from the retailer or the manufacturer after all efforts have been exhausted, you have the option of **pursuing the matter through the courts.**

Government Agencies

Listed below are some of the government agencies which are most frequently consulted by consumers with marketplace/safety inquiries or complaints.

Federal Government Agencies

1. Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada, Product Safety Branch

Food Advertising

This Department shares responsibility for enforcing the **Food and Drug Act**. Under the Act all advertising aired in T.V. or radio in Canada which makes claims about food must be cleared through the Canadian Radio and Television Commission and submitted to the Department for approval to make sure no misleading claims are made. The Department regularly checks out food advertising in newspapers and magazines, as well.

Labels are also considered to be advertising and as such are subject to control. The Department stipulates that the following information should appear on a food label:

- the common name of the food
- the net quantity of the food
- the name and address of the person responsible for the product
- the list of ingredients
- the durable shelf life and storage instructions as required

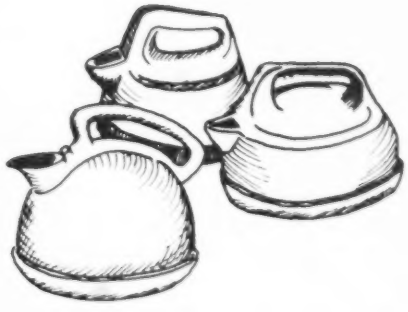
Fabrics

The Department requires manufacturers to use labels to tell consumers the name of the fibres used in the fabric and the amount of each fibre by percentage, and encourages the use of care labelling for items that need cleaning or laundering.

Product Safety

Under the **Hazardous Products Act,** the Department is also responsible for **product safety.** This Act schedules specific standards for the manufacture of the following products:

cradles and cribs
playpens
pacifiers and soothers
bathtub enclosures and shower doors
liquid coating materials
paint and varnish removers
children's sleepwear and dressing gowns
various chemical products such as bleaches
corrosive chemicals
glazed ceramics
electric kettles (for lead content)
science education products or children's chemistry sets
textile products
spectacle frames
kites and kite strings
safety glass
hockey helmets
toys
matches
anti-freeze
charcoal
cellulose insulation



As well, the Act covers products designed for household, garden or personal use, for use in sport or recreational activities, or in life-saving equipment — anything, in fact, that could be a danger to the health or safety of the public because of its design, construction or contents.

As a means of alerting the public to potential hazards, the Department designed the four hazard symbols shown below, and insists on their use whenever they apply.

HAZARDOUS PRODUCT SYMBOLS

POISON **FLAMMABLE** **EXPLOSIVE** **CORROSIVE**

the symbols above show the TYPE of hazard a product contains
the frames below show the DEGREE of that hazard

(the symbols will always appear inside a frame)

DANGER **WARNING** **CAUTION**

These signs alert and protect adults and children.

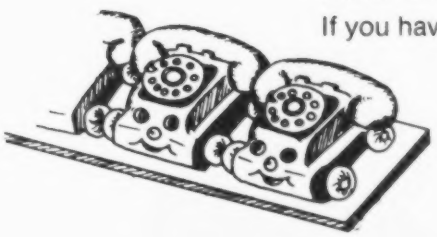
The Product Safety Branch operates fully-equipped laboratories to test up to 2,500 products a year for flammability and mechanical standards testing.

If a consumer product is considered to be hazardous and dangerous, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada and Health and Welfare Canada ask the manufacturer to either fix it or take it off the shelf. This request is backed by powers of seizure or prosecution, but usually there is voluntary compliance. If the product is already in the hands of consumers, the Department can issue public warnings.

If you believe or are advised that you have a hazardous product on your hands, be cautious. Under no circumstances should you continue to consume or use it. Return the item to the retailer for a refund or the manufacturer for repair, replacement or compensation.

If you have any questions or complaints, contact:

Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada
105 - 21st Street E.
Saskatoon S7K 0B3 Telephone: 975-4028



2. Health and Welfare Canada, Health Protection Branch

Food, Drug, Cosmetics, Radiation Devices

The Branch is responsible for protecting the Canadian public from hazards and unsafe foods, drugs, cosmetics and medical and radiation-emitting devices (x-ray machines, microwave ovens). It makes regular checks of all companies involved in the manufacture of the above products to make sure these products are produced in compliance with the law.

While investigators from the Branch are highly informed about potentially dangerous products, they also depend on consumer calls when a product is suspect. All complaints are investigated, and an investigator will pick up a suspect product from your home.

The Branch is also responsible for protecting consumers against chemical and natural hazards, against exposure to filth and foreign matter in foods, against foods of inferior nutritional quality, and against the unregulated addition of any food additives. There are special regulations for dietary foods and labelling to help consumers make wise and careful decisions about their worth and value. As well, the Branch establishes standards for drug quality in prescription and over-the-counter drugs and for animal feed additives and pesticides used in food production.

Recalls

The Health Protection Branch will urge the voluntary recall of any foods, drugs, cosmetics or medical and radiation-emitting devices that are considered to be hazardous. Although recalls are not regulated or mandatory, voluntary compliance with the request usually results in the products being removed from the marketplace. Government inspectors follow up and monitor the recall to make sure all inspected lots are taken off the market. In a crisis, inspectors may be directly involved in physically removing the products.

If you have any questions or complaints about foods, drugs, cosmetics and medical and radiation-emitting devices, contact the nearest Health Protection Branch, Health and Welfare Canada.

In Saskatchewan:

Health and Welfare Canada
Health Protection Branch
103 - 1855 Smith Street
Regina S4P 2N5

Telephone: 780-5407

Health and Welfare Canada
Health Protection Branch
101-22nd Street East
Saskatoon S7K 0E1

Telephone: 975-4502

3. Canadian Accident Injury Reporting and Evaluation System (CAIRE)

In 1982, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada set up CAIRE. Five hospitals across Canada, including the Pasqua Hospital in Regina, collect data and information about any accidents involving household, recreational and children's products. This information is available to the public through periodic reports issued by the Product Safety Branch.

4. Transport Canada

Through the **Motor Vehicle Safety Act,** Transport Canada is responsible for the safety of all automobile vehicles. This includes automobiles, motor vehicles, scuba diving equipment, snowmobiles, life-saving equipment, and children's car seats.

The Act lists many safety standards that deal with the design, construction, performance, control of emissions, tires, and other standards.

All new motor vehicles must meet these safety standards and the Department ensures that they go through a system of information gathering, testing and inspection. If the vehicles are safe and the standards met, the Department stamps a safety mark on the vehicles certifying that they are safe. Non-complying vehicles are subject to seizure and possible forfeiture.

The Department also investigates safety problems in vehicles already on the market. When such vehicles are found to be unsafe, the Department requires the manufacturers to notify the affected parties and to provide a description of the defect, to specify the safety risk involved, and to state what is to be done to correct the defect. The Department carefully monitors any recalls to make sure that defective automotive vehicles are repaired.

The Act does not specify that a manufacturer is to fix the defect for free. Most do; however, there may be cases where although the defect is repaired free of charge, other related problems arising from the defect are not.

Transport Canada has a list of all vehicles that have been recalled and issues a quarterly report highlighting the major recall campaigns. For information on a specific vehicle, write directly to the manufacturer, providing the vehicle identification number, make, model and year of car. Or check reports in your local library or the Consumer Information Centre.

For information or complaints, contact:

Manager
Transport Canada
Room 106 - 2050 Cornwall Street
Regina, S4P 2K5

Telephone: 780-5036

Provincial Government Agencies

1. Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs

The Department receives enquiries from both businesses and consumers on rights and responsibilities in the marketplace and provides practical advice, before and after a purchase is made. The Department receives your complaint and mediates between the buyer and seller to arrive at a mutually satisfactory resolution of any problems when a complaint is justified.

Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs also works with businesses and business associations to establish or improve a code of ethics for association or industry members and to ensure that businesses provide just and equitable treatment to consumers.

The Consumer Products Warranties Act

The Department also administers **The Consumer Products Warranties Act,** which outlines the responsibilities of sellers or manufacturers for losses resulting from defects in consumer products and sets out seven basic warranties known as statutory warranties.

When a consumer buys a product from a Saskatchewan retailer, these seven basic warranties provide you with a minimum standard of protection and are considered to be given to you by the retailer and manufacturer even though they were not stated in writing or given to you verbally:

1. you should be able to enjoy ownership of the goods without fear of undisclosed liens or other claims against them;
2. the product must match its description;
3. the goods must be of acceptable quality;
4. the goods must be fit for any specific purpose stated by you as well as their usual purpose, unless it is obvious at the time of purchase that the goods could not meet their usual or specified purpose;
5. if you purchase a product based on a sample, then the product must match the quality of the sample and must be free from defects;
6. the goods must be durable for a reasonable period of time; and,
7. spare parts and repair facilities must be available for a reasonable period of time, although not necessarily in the province.

If a product is faulty but can be repaired, the Act says you are entitled to have it repaired at no cost to you. If a seller fails to repair the product, you can have it repaired elsewhere and recover your cost from the seller.

If something is substantially wrong with the product and cannot be repaired, you may reject it and recover your purchase price, less a deduction for use, from the retailer or manufacturer.

You are also entitled to recover compensation for any losses you have suffered which could normally be expected to result from failure to meet the statutory warranties, including compensation for losses resulting from personal injury.

Manufacturers' and retailers' statements made to you, either verbally or in writing, about the product or its performance are considered binding and legal warranties if they induce you to buy the product. The seller or manufacturer is obliged to live up to the promises made.

If there are additional written warranties, these are considered to be given to you in **addition** to your basic statutory warranties and in no way can they take precedence over them, replace them or limit your rights in any way.

Consumer Information Centre

Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs operates the Consumer Information Centre in Regina which is a central clearing house of consumer information and educational resource materials. You can call the Consumer Information Centre directly, or you can visit your public library and ask for the Consumer Product Information Service on safety aspects and efficiency of various consumer products, appliances, new technology equipment, used cars, etc. This service is now available through public libraries in Melfort, Moose Jaw, Estevan, Saskatoon, Melville, Yorkton, Weyburn, Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Swift Current, Prince Albert and Regina and through the Regional Library System and its Branches.

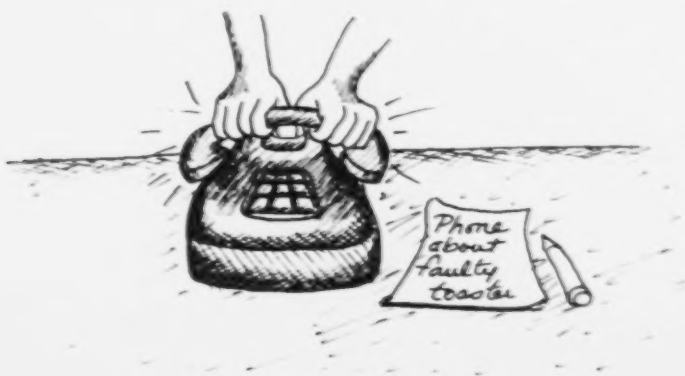
Consumer Education

The Department also provides consumer education seminars and workshops on a wide range of consumer issues including consumer safety.

For more information contact:

Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs

1871 Smith Street Regina S4P 3V7	224 - 4th Avenue South Saskatoon S7K 2H6	800 Central Avenue Prince Albert S6V 6Z2
Telephone: 787-5550	Telephone: 933-5725	Telephone: 953-2211



2. Saskatchewan Health

This department is responsible for enforcing and monitoring regulations under **The Public Health Act** and other health-related regulations to ensure maximum health protection and services for Saskatchewan residents.

The Public Health Inspection Services Branch is responsible for safeguarding public health and safety which might be endangered by physical, chemical and biological hazards. Services include consultation and inspection of facilities and enforcement of regulations under **The Public Health Act** with regard to such things as: the regular and continuous monitoring of public accommodations, residential facilities (hotels and apartment buildings), personal service establishments (barber and beauty shops), public eating establishments, bake shops, sawmill, lumber and mining camps, public schools and hospitals, retail stores and other commercial, recreational or public facilities.

Public Health Inspectors check to see that standards of ventilation, sanitation, water supply, waste disposal and safety are in compliance with minimum standards.

Public Health Inspectors also:

- monitor all municipal water and sewage treatment facilities as well as any private systems located in environmentally sensitive locations in order to prevent both shoreline and water pollution.
- check intensive livestock operations routinely.
- check microwave ovens in commercial establishments on behalf of Saskatchewan Labour.
- conduct inspections relating to food and directed at food manufacturing operations, storage facilities, transportation systems and retailing operations.

The Provincial Laboratories:

The Provincial Lab conducts a wide range of health and safety-related tests to help prevent illness, to detect unsuspected threats to the health of individuals or the environment, and to obtain information that can assist in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness of residents of the province. Specifically the laboratories:

- conduct most of the lab tests required by Saskatchewan Environment on surface waters and industrial waste waters, monitoring potash dust fallout, or determining the mercury content of fish.
- check surface and ground waters to make sure they are suitable for drinking.
- conduct protective tests on retail dairy products.
- operate a 24-hour poison identification service to help physicians with patients who have ingested a toxic substance or drug. Toxicology staff report findings within minutes or hours of receipt of these specimens.

For more information, contact:

Saskatchewan Health
T.C. Douglas Building
3475 Albert Street
Regina S4S 6X6

Telephone: 787-3168

3. Saskatchewan Labour, Occupational Health and Safety Branch

The **Safety Services Division** conducts specialized inspection services and regulates licensing to ensure the electrical, elevator, boiler and pressure vessel, fire, gas, and radiation safety of all public buildings or places of employment including mines.

The **Fire Safety Unit** inspects public buildings, prepares practical programs in fire prevention, examines plans and specifications of public buildings, carries out fire and arson investigations, and provides assistance to other government departments, municipalities, industry and organizations with respect to fire safety matters.

The **Hygiene Unit** is concerned with identification and control of health hazards in the workplace.

The **Industrial Toxicology Unit** investigates health and toxicological problems at work and provides support and advisory services to eliminate hazards associated with industrial processes or the non-compliance with standards.

The **Boiler and Pressure Unit** conducts periodic inspections of all high pressure boilers, low pressure boilers, and other pressure vessels. Engineers and firepersons who will be operating this equipment must also have the necessary qualifications and be examined and licensed by the Department.

The **Electrical and Elevator Safety Unit** examines new electrical installations, electrical equipment, alterations or additions and re-inspects existing electrical installations. It also periodically inspects all passenger and freight elevators in the province.

The **Gas Safety Unit** inspects new installations, alterations, additions, replacements and existing installations in domestic dwellings and public and high occupancy buildings. It licenses installing contractors, gas fitters and wholesale suppliers of gas equipment and inspects all consumer installations and ensures that gas appliances and equipment installed in the province bear the seal of an agency authorized to test and certify such equipment.

The **Radiation Safety Unit** consults with, inspects and investigates hospitals, community clinics, chiropractors, dentists and veterinarians with diagnostic x-ray equipment, and also inspects non-diagnostic x-ray equipment found at universities or in the industrial workplace. It conducts routine inspections of commercial microwave ovens and responds to any reports of adverse health hazards associated with radiation-emitting equipment.

For information, contact:

Saskatchewan Labour
Saskatchewan Place
1870 Albert St.
Regina S4P 3V7

Telephone: 787-2425

4. Saskatchewan Environment

The Department administers and enforces several Acts including **The Environment Act, The Air Pollution Control Act, The Litter Control Act, The Environmental Spill Control Regulations,** and other regulations to ensure that Saskatchewan residents are safe from environmental hazards occuring naturally or created by humans.

Other responsibilities include:

- issuing permits to industrial operations to ensure air pollution control standards are met;
- enforcing regulations dealing with the storage, treatment, transport and disposal of hazardous wastes and substances;
- administering a program to control the environmental effects of all mining development through licensing, monitoring and inspection of operations and effluents at mine sites;
- managing water quality and controlling pollution through programs of approvals, inspections and technical assistance for water and sewage works for municipalities and industry;
- operating a program to collect, crush and dispose of pesticide containers and any associated residue; and
- enforcing regulations designed to safeguard the environment in the event of a spill.

For information, contact:

Saskatchewan Environment
3085 Alberta Street
Regina S4S 0B1

Telephone: 787-6113

5. Saskatchewan Agriculture, Soils & Crops Branch

The Branch regulates and enforces **The Pest Control Products (Saskatchewan) Act** to promote the careful and judicious use, distribution and handling of pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and fumigants, rodenticides and other pest control products used in agriculture or in the home. All pesticide applicators must be trained and licensed.

For more information, contact:

Saskatchewan Agriculture, Soils & Crops Branch
Room 133, Walter Scott Bldg.
3085 Albert Street
Regina S4S 0B1

Telephone: 787-4660

Standards Council of Canada (SCC)

The Standards Council of Canada is the national agency mandated by Parliament to **co-ordinate** standardization in Canada and to create a National Standards System. The Federal Government has given responsibility to the SCC to promote voluntary standardization in order to advance the national economy, benefit the health, safety and welfare of the public, assist and protect consumers, facilitate domestic and international trade, and further international co-operation in the field of standards.

To do this, the Council works with a number of private, independent organizations which together make up Canada's National Standards System. The accredited standards-writing organizations are:

- The Canadian Standards Association (CSA)
- The Canadian Gas Association (CGA)
- Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC)
- Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB)
- Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ)

These organizations are granted accreditation for standards writing. Each identifies products that meet specifications or minimum performance or safety requirements set by a committee made up of users, industry and government representatives. These products are identified with the organizations' logo or "certified", indicating that the product conforms with their standards.

Where possible, National Standards of Canada are based on internationally accepted standards so that a manufacturer can sell a product world-wide. The SCC participates in a number of international standardization committees for this purpose.

For more information, contact:

The Standards Council of Canada
350 Parks Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 7S8

Toll free in Canada 1-800-267-8220

Independent Certification Agencies

1. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA)

CSA is Canada's major standards development, certification, testing and inspection program. It has a network of 6,000 volunteer committee members from all walks of life and parts of Canada who serve on over 1,000 standards committees. These are the people who develop new standards and continually revise existing standards as the marketplace dictates. CSA standards, therefore, reflect a national consensus. Another 2,000 corporate sustaining members support the Association's standards-writing work. A staff of 700 administer the standards development process and provide certification, testing and inspection services.

The CSA mark is the registered trademark of the Association. This mark on a product means that the manufacturer has submitted a prototype of the product to CSA and that it meets all the requirements of a CSA standard. The mark also signifies that the manufacturer has entered into a contractual agreement with CSA to continue to make the product in compliance with the appropriate standard. CSA inspectors make periodic unannounced visits each year to manufacturers' plants to re-examine the product to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of the standard. Under the terms of the contract, the manufacturer is committed to take corrective action if the product is found to deviate from the standard.

In most cases, compliance by manufacturers with CSA standards is voluntary — that's why it is possible to find similar products in the marketplace with and without the CSA mark. A wise consumer checks for the mark before purchasing.

Some products, however, require CSA certification by law and must carry CSA certification. **All electrical products, for example, sold in Saskatchewan, and for that matter in all the provinces, must carry the CSA certification mark.**

Some non-complying electrical products do find their way into the market. If you buy and use them, you are risking exposure to shock and fire hazards. If you come across them, be sure to report their availability to the Provincial Departments of Labour or Consumer & Commercial Affairs.

Although CSA certification is best identified with electrical products, look for the mark on many other products such as:

- tools, appliances, office machines;
- chainsaws, ladders, construction hard hats and safety boots;
- child-resistant packaging, kitchen cabinets, plumbing fixtures, windows, wood-burning appliances, containers for flammable fuels; and
- bicycles, eye protectors for racquet sports, hockey helmets and face masks, recreational vehicles.

Over half a billion different products sold in the Canadian marketplace carry the CSA certification mark. This mark is information. It tells you that the product or system has been examined, evaluated, tested and inspected and that it complies with applicable standards and requirements for safety and performance. It's up to you to watch for the mark!

The Canadian Standards Association also investigates consumer complaints. If a product is found to be potentially hazardous, it could result in a recall of that product. As a consumer, you could assist in this recall process by filling out and returning all warranty cards as soon as you buy or receive a product which includes a warranty. Should there be a problem with the product, the warranty card can serve as an excellent way for the manufacturer to notify you of any potential hazard or defect. Take time to see that you are protected!

For information, contact:

The Canadian Standards Association
178 Rexdale Blvd.
Rexdale, Ontario M9W 1R3 Telephone: (416) 747-4007

2. The Canadian Gas Association (CGA)

CGA writes standards for and certifies gas-fueled products. You'll find the CGA certification mark on items such as gas barbecues, swimming pool heaters, gas furnaces and portable camping equipment such as gas camp stoves, lights, heaters and refrigerators.

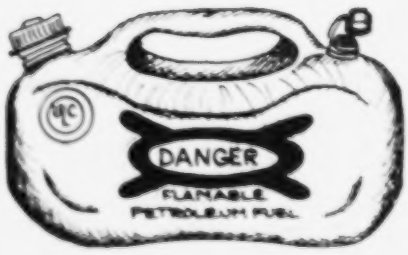
For more information, contact:

The Canadian Gas Association
55 Scarsdale Road
Don Mills, Ontario M3R 2R3 Telephone: (416) 447-6465

3. Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC)

ULC certification relates to life, fire and property hazards. You'll find the ULC label on products such as: fire protection equipment, smoke alarms and fire extinguishers, on burglar alarms, and on chimneys and fireplace inserts or factory-built fireplaces.

For information, contact:



Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada
7 Crouse Road
Scarborough, Ontario M1R 3A9 Telephone: (416) 757-3611

4. Warnock Hersey Professional Services (WHPS)

WHPS certifies fire resistant construction items such as fire doors, fire door frames and hardware and wall assemblies. It also certifies fireplace and chimney systems and surface burning characteristics of building materials.

For information in Saskatchewan or Manitoba, contact:

Warnock Hersey Professional Services
1154 Sanford Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 2Z9 Telephone: (204) 678-7820

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW IF THERE IS A CANADIAN STANDARD FOR SOME PRODUCT OR PROCEDURE, OR IF YOU WANT TO OBTAIN A COPY OF A STANDARD, YOU MAY CONTACT THE STANDARDS INFORMATION SERVICE, TOLL-FREE FROM ANYWHERE IN CANADA, BY TELEPHONING 1-800-267-8220

Other Agencies and Organizations Concerned With Consumer and Product Safety

1. Canada Safety Council

The Canada Safety Council is a non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of accidents. It gathers, catalogues and disseminates information on safety and health in all areas.

For information, contact:

Canada Safety Council
1765 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa, Ontario
K9G 3V4

Telephone (613) 521-6881

2. Consumers' Association of Canada (Saskatchewan Branch)

Consumers' Association of Canada is a voluntary, non-profit organization with branches and over 130,000 members across the country. Saskatchewan has 8,000 members.

The objectives of the organization are:

- to unite the strength of consumers
- to study consumer problems and make recommendations for solving them
- to bring consumer needs to the attention of governments, trade and industry
- to provide information for consumers on consumer goods and services
- to conduct research and tests on behalf of consumers.

Since opening in 1976, CAC's unique laboratory in Ottawa has tested over 5,000 products. Results of these test are published regularly in the magazine **Canadian Consumer**. CAC Saskatchewan also provides information to consumers by telephone or letter, presents consumer briefs at public hearings, speaks for consumers to the media, and provides speakers and resource people.

For more information, contact:

Consumers' Association of Canada (Saskatchewan Branch)
345 Anderson Cres.
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7H 4A2

Telephone: 242-4909

3. The Saskatchewan Safety Council

The Saskatchewan Safety Council is a voluntary, non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of accidents and fatalities due to accidents. It is made up of more than 350 member organizations representing all the major sectors of Saskatchewan: industry, business, government departments, volunteer organizations, and co-operatives, as well as individuals with an interest in safety.

The Council offers a variety of programs including: defensive driving, professional driver improvement, motorcycle training, school bus safety, bicycle safety, and bicycle licences.

As a co-operating agency of the National Safety Council (U.S.) and the Canada Safety Council, it offers the safety programs provided by these two major agencies such as: Block Parent Program, Elmer the Safety Elephant, and other courses including winter survival, farm safety, babysitting training, fire control, basic industrial safety, safe boating, etc.

For more information, contact:

The Saskatchewan Safety Council
348 Victoria Avenue
Regina, Sask.
S4N 0P6

Telephone: 757-3197

4. Saskatchewan Child & Youth Safety Committee

The Saskatchewan Child & Youth Safety Committee was formed in 1982 to reduce the accident toll among children and youth. Members represent the private sector, related organizations and government. It advises the Saskatchewan Minister of Health on accident prevention measures, promotes accident prevention efforts in the members' respective organizations and professions, provides research and recommendations and provides information and referrals on child and youth safety.

For more information, contact:

Saskatchewan Child & Youth Safety Committee

Ruth Robinson, Chairperson
117 Mt. Allison Crescent
Saskatoon, Sask.
S7H 4A4

Telephone: 933-5557 or Kathy Dotson 787-7069 (Regina)

5. Toxicology Research Centre

The Toxicology Research Centre is a non-profit, independent research organization. Its major purpose is to provide a research facility to help Canadians with practical problems arising from the use and misuse of chemicals such as: fertilizers, pesticides, toxins produced by moulds, the effects of various fats and oil on the heart, etc.

The TRC is located at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon and supported by the Province of Saskatchewan, the University of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada.

For more information, contact:

Toxicology Research Centre
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 0W0

Telephone: 966-7441

6. Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association

The Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association is the licensing and regulatory body for pharmacists in the province. All pharmacists wishing to practice in the province must belong. The Association provides continuing education for pharmacists with the University of Saskatchewan, encourages consumers to discuss prescription and over-the-counter drugs with their pharmacists, and is responsible for the implementation of the **Drug Caution Code** in Saskatchewan.

For more information, contact:

Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association
301 - 2631 28th Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 6X3

Telephone: 584-2292

7. The Consumer Information Centre — Product Information Service

The Consumer Information Centre has reliable information on products and services including product tests and do-it-yourself guides. The files contain up-to-date information on over 250 consumer products ranging from air cleaners to water filters and on subjects from advertising to standards. If the Centre doesn't have the information, it will refer you to someone who can help.

For more information, contact:

Consumer Information Centre
Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs
1871 Smith Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7

Telephone: 787-5557

Some Sources of Product Information

To help you deal with the growing number of products in the marketplace and make decisions about which ones to purchase, a number of government agencies and consumer organizations produce a variety of consumer information materials, from magazines and pamphlets providing factual information about hazardous products and standards, to films and videos on how to effectively lodge a consumer complaint or become more assertive as a consumer.

Several organizations have information publications available at no cost. Some of these include:

1. CSA & The Consumer

Published quarterly by the Canadian Standards Association, this bulletin contains information on CSA standards, product standards and many helpful safety hints. Appropriate for grade 7 and up and the general public. For a free subscription, write:

Consumer Editor
Canadian Standards Association
178 Rexdale Blvd.
Rexdale, Ontario
M9W 1R3

2. Consensus

This quarterly magazine published by the Standards Council is aimed at professionals in business, government and education. It carries in-depth, topical articles on standards activity at both a national and international level. For a free subscription, write:

Standards Council of Canada
350 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 7S8

3. Dialogue: A Consumer Newsletter

This quarterly is published by the Standards Council. Aimed at a general audience, the newsletter explores topical standards of interest, introduces basic standards concepts, explores Canadian standards-writing organizations, and contains a section on what reference materials are available in the field. Suitable for grade 8 and up, consumer groups and people generally interested in consumer protection. For free copies, write:

Standards Council of Canada
350 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario
S1R 7S8

4. Safety Canada

A bi-monthly bulletin, published by the Canada Safety Council, aims at informing professionals and volunteers working in the safety area about current events. For free copies, contact:

Canada Safety Council
1765 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa, Ontario
K1G 3V4

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The following publications carry a subscription price:

5. Canadian Consumer

A monthly publication produced by the Consumers' Association of Canada, provides a wide variety of product test reports, articles and "how to" features which indicate a concern for safety in consumer products and their usage. Membership cost of $25 includes 12 issues. Subscriptions available from:

Canadian Consumer
Box 9300
Ottawa, Ontario
K1G 3T9
Attn: Circulation Department

6. Living Safety

Another Canada Safety Council publication is aimed for safe family living. Published quarterly, it provides articles written by safety professionals, covering a wide range of contemporary issues such as product safety, do-it-yourself safety, recreational safety as well as regular features such as quizzes for young people. It is available at $6 per year from:

Canada Safety Council
1765 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa, Ontario
K1G 3V4

7. Protect Yourself

This magazine is published monthly by the Quebec Office de la Protection du Consommateur. Like the **Canadian Consumer**, articles and test reports show an interest in safety. Subscriptions are $11 annually and are available from:

Protect Yourself
531 Deslauriers, Suite 222
St. Laurent, Quebec
H4N 1W2

Telephone: (514) 337-8361

Proceed With Caution

Some pointers to keep in mind:

1. Know your rights and responsibilities. Be aware!
2. Ask questions. Be sure you understand.
3. Research the product and the business.
4. Ask for references.
5. Shop around. Compare prices and materials.
6. Check for alternatives which would also serve your needs.
7. Stop to read the labels. Look for symbols indicating hazardous products and words that warn you of the dangers.
8. Look for the symbol that tells you the product has met a minimum standard of safety and performance standards.
9. Bring dangerous or hazardous products to the attention of authorities who can do something about the product. Stop using hazardous products immediately!
10. Be concerned! Accidents are the leading cause of death for Canadians under 40. Over 55% of all deaths to young people between 1 and 24 are as a result of falls, fires, poisonings, drownings and motor vehicle accidents.

ALWAYS BE CAREFUL ... BUYER BEWARE!

Test Your Ability to Avoid Problems in the Marketplace

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!" In order to avoid problems with your marketplace transactions, here are some general questions to ask.

1. Do I really need this purchase or is the need created by advertisers and marketing specialists?
2. Do I know enough about the product to make an informed decision?
3. Where can I go for unbiased, comparative information?
4. Where can I get references on the product or the business?
5. Where can I check to see if there have been any problems with the product, service or business I will be dealing with?
6. What are my basic rights as a consumer?
7. What are my responsibilities as a consumer?
8. What kinds of questions should I ask when I want to find out about a product and who should I ask?
9. Why are warranties important and why should I always complete and send in my warranty cards?
10. Why is it important to make valid consumer complaints?

Emergency

It's difficult to know how you're going to react when an emergency occurs. But, there are steps you can take to assist you should you have to cope. Have a list of emergency telephone numbers handy on your kitchen bulletin board or by the telephone.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

Doctor _____

Ambulance _____

Poison Control Centre _____

Hospital _____

Police _____

Fire Department _____

Pharmacist _____

Dentist _____

Neighbour _____

Insurance Agent _____

REMEMBER **911** IF IT IS APPLICABLE IN YOUR AREA.

In case of serious injury call a doctor, hospital or other emergency service immediately. Keep calm, briefly explain what has happened and ask what to do until help arrives. A must in every home is an easily accessible and well-maintained first aid kit. Take advantage of the excellent courses in first aid and/or cardiopulmonary resuscitation offered by organizations like the **St. John's Ambulance,** the **Canadian Red Cross Society** and the **Royal Life Saving Society.**

Notes